

LABOUR PARTY
DISCUSSION NOTES No. 23

LEISURE

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NOT A STATEMENT OF LABOUR PARTY POLICY

LABOUR PARTY DISCUSSION NOTES (23)

This is the twenty-third in the series of Discussion Notes issued for the use of Labour Party Political Education Officers and Discussion Leaders. It is **not** a statement of Labour Party policy.

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ADVICE TO DISCUSSION LEADERS

In each of the three Sections of these Notes many questions arise for discussion, and **three meetings could usefully be spent on them. If, however, this is not possible the group should give two.** In that case, Sections I and II could be discussed at the first meeting and Section III at the second. This division is suggested because Section III includes the subjects television, the cinema, sport and outdoor recreation, on which there may be more discussion than on Section II.

Members should be asked to read the Notes beforehand, and also at least those chapters of "Leisure for Living" in which they are most interested. While the proposals for the future made in the Policy statement are summarised in the Notes, few of the facts are repeated.

You could begin your first opening talk by asking the members what "leisure" means to them, and start them talking about this when the discussion time comes. Then, if two meetings only are spent on the Notes, you could give the main facts under the headings "How Much Leisure?" in Section I, and "The Government and the Arts" and "The Local Authorities and the Arts" in Section II. You could finish your talk by suggesting those questions for discussion, at the end of each Section, which you think will interest the members.

Your second opening talk could most usefully be a summary of the main points covered in Section III. This would not take too long. Again you could finish your talk by suggesting those questions for discussion at the end of the Section which you think will interest the group.

LABOUR PARTY EDUCATION SERVICE

Discussion Notes on

LEISURE

These Discussion Notes supplement the Policy Statement "Leisure for Living", published in September last year. They give additional material which will be useful in considering the problems there raised, and summarise the proposals made for action by the next Labour Government.

The Section headings are as follows:

- I. The Use of Leisure.
- II. How the State can Help (a)
The Arts.
- III. How the State can Help (b)
Sound and Television Broadcasting.
The Cinema.
The Open Air.

I. THE USE OF LEISURE

What does "leisure" mean to us? The chance to put up our feet after a hard day's work? Or to watch other people doing things, at a football or cricket match? Or to do things ourselves, play games, take part in a choral society? Have we the opportunity to use our leisure as we would like? And what of the people who don't know what to do with their leisure, to whom too often it brings only boredom?

It is not the intention of the Labour Party to tell people how to use their leisure. The purpose of "Leisure for Living" is to "try to show what can be done to ensure that everybody . . . will have a

better chance than now of enjoying life to the full out of working hours", through better planned and more generous action by public authorities.

The socialist view is that everyone should have the opportunity to live a full life, the opportunity to develop their capacities as individuals. Of this "enjoying life to the full out of working hours" is a very important part. But it cannot be made possible without solving many other problems.

It depends on planning the economic and social life of the community in such a way that there is full employment (the "leisure" of unemployment means frustration, not enjoyment), shorter hours, more free time for the housewife, greater production and a fairer distribution of wealth, equal opportunities in education and in getting jobs. How a Labour Government would plan on these lines is set out in the Policy Statements which have been issued during the last three years, and the whole question of leisure must be looked at as part of a much wider whole.

How Much Leisure?

Before considering the use of leisure we must get some idea how much people actually have today in comparison with past years. This is by no means easy. The Ministry of Labour makes a half-yearly enquiry (published in the Ministry of Labour Gazette) into the hours worked in manufacturing industry, building, transport (other than railways, London Transport and British Road Services), the public utilities (gas, water, etc.), mining and quarrying (not coal) and government service. In addition to the railways and coal mining, the enquiry excludes agriculture, retail trade, clerical work (apart from government service), the professions, to mention only the more important groups.

The basic working week, that is the hours beyond which overtime rates become payable, has fallen since the war, and is now 44 or 45 hours, excluding meal times, in most industries. **What matters for our purpose, however, is not basic hours, which are often only the standard, but the hours actually worked, including overtime.** These are given by the Ministry of Labour for the industries covered by its enquiry.

In April 1959 the average weekly hours worked by all workers in these industries were 46.3, the average for men being 48 and for women 41.5. There were great differences between industries, men's hours ranging from 44.8 in clothing to nearly 51 in certain sectors of transport.

In April 1947 the average hours worked in the same industries were 45 (men 46.3, women 41.5). In October 1938 the average was 46.5 (men 47.7, women 43.5). **Thus the amount of leisure of workers in these industries is less on average each week than after the war, and no more than in 1938.**

Much the same is true in agriculture. It is estimated that in 1938 the average hours worked were 53 a week. The Ministry of Labour gives the average hours worked between April 1947 and March 1948 as 51.3 for men and 49.2 for women and girls, and between April 1958 and March 1959 as 52 for men and 48.4 for women and girls.

In retail trade, on the other hand, while in 1947 average hours worked were probably a little less than they are today, **they are now considerably less than in 1938.** The Wages Councils for retail trades fix a normal working week of 46 hours, but in most cases hours worked are a good deal less. There is no overtime except at Christmas, stock-taking and during sales. In 1938 the normal working week was 53 to 56 hours in food trades (48 or less in Co-operative Societies), and some employees worked 60 hours or more. In non-food trades hours were rather less.

If, however, we go back to earlier years we find that there has been a considerable advance. Before the 1914-18 war, 53 or 54 hours a week was the commonest standard (that is not including overtime) amongst the well-organised manual workers, and in some occupations there was a much longer working week. For example, large sections of the iron and steel industry still worked 12-hour shifts; and on the railways over half the employees worked a 10-hour day and one-fifth a 12-hour day. After the war a 48-hour week came to be recognised as the standard (again not including overtime) for most industries.

The hours worked in industry in Britain today are very similar to those in other Western European countries, but more than in North America. The average for all workers in manufacturing industry in this country in April 1959 was 45.7 hours a week, in Western Germany (in June) it was 46, in France 44.3, in Canada 40.3, in U.S.A. (in June) 40.7.

What of the Future? While little or no progress has been made since before the war in the amount of leisure most workers have, apart from holidays with pay, in the very near future there should be considerable reductions in hours, provided that methods of production are up-to-date in British industry. Since it increases productivity, that is the amount which can be produced in a given time, automation has great possibilities for raising the standard of living, including in this more leisure through shorter hours of work and longer holidays with pay.

For many years the Trade Unions have fought for shorter hours. Today they insist that modern methods of production must give the workers both higher incomes **and** more leisure, and, with the full support of the T.U.C. General Council, many are demanding a 40-hour week.

Two questions for consideration must be noted here. One is that it is not only hours of actual work which decide how much leisure people have. As cities grow in size, more and more time is taken up in travelling to and from work, very often under deplorable conditions, and this is especially serious in London.

The other is that automation, as it spreads, will most probably increase shift work, since it is wasteful not to keep expensive machines continuously employed. While hours of work may be less, shift work may reduce in some respects the **quality** of the greater leisure secured. For example, it often means that free time varies from week to week, and that therefore it is difficult to use it satisfactorily by joining in outside activities which take place at the same time every week.

The Housewife. So far we have been thinking about the leisure time of people who are "gainfully occupied". What about the housewife? **Has her leisure time increased? And will a higher standard of living give her greater leisure?** There is no doubt that, with better planned houses, and labour-saving devices such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines, the work of most housewives, **as housewives,** has been reduced. As the standard of living rises this will continue and spread.

On the other hand, more women than ever before in peace-time are going out to work, and a growing proportion are married women. According to the Ministry of Labour, in 1950 the number of married women in employment was 2,850,000, or 40% of the total number of

women in employment; in 1956 the number was 3,720,000, of 49%. This means that, in spite of labour-saving in the home, many married women have much less leisure.

Socialism and Leisure

The standard of living of the people of the industrial nations is higher today than ever before, and, if war can be avoided, it will go on rising. This has been made possible by modern sources of power, modern methods of mass production of goods, modern forms of transport. Mass production means that much work is dull and repetitive. As automatic methods spread, increasingly workers become not even machine operators but machine minders. Though new skills are needed by monitors of automatic control systems and computer-operators in offices, the work is still machine minding.

In the older crafts, his work means to the craftsman using his trained abilities in doing things with his hands. These crafts are still of importance in all work on the land and always will be—a machine can milk cows, but it cannot take the place of the shepherd at lambing time. Even on the land their importance grows less; and there is no room in modern industry for the older crafts of working in wood and stone, clay and metal. The modern crafts, such as skilled engineering, do give some satisfaction in work, but they too become of less importance with technological developments. **Thus a growing number of workers today find in their work little or no scope for their abilities or for the desire to create.** This is inevitable so long as people put first the demand for more and more material things, and are prepared to sacrifice satisfaction in work to a higher material standard of life.

The purpose of socialism is to develop “the whole man”. As we have said above, “the socialist view is that everyone should have the opportunity to live a full life, the opportunity to develop their capacities as individuals”. **Since for more and more people work gives no scope for development, to the socialist it is therefore essential that one of the results of our greater power to produce shall be more leisure, more time for the development of their capacities which is denied to most people in their working hours.**

Not much will be gained from greater leisure, however, unless people are capable of using it satisfactorily, and have the opportunity to do so. We are obsessed with saving time—faster trains, faster cars,

First, if, as we say above, leisure should give "more time for the development of their capacities which is denied to most people in their working hours", **there is a great need to provide as much opportunity as possible for people to do things themselves instead of merely watching others do them**—playing games or taking part in drama groups or handicraft classes. Such opportunities are especially important for young people. For example, according to "The Younger Generation", "The young . . . now spend more time watching television than on any other single form of leisure time activity".

Discussion is an essential part of the method of running classes in adult education, that is the spare-time study, for a non-vocational purpose, of such subjects as literature, art, history, economics: this meets to some extent the need for self-expression or "self-activity".

In this connection, the value of the use of leisure for what may be called citizenship activities must be taken into account: voluntary social service, such as running Youth Clubs, or work in the Trade Union or Co-operative Movements or in politics.

Second, apart from positive help for leisure occupations, State action does much to determine the background to leisure. Two examples only can be given. One is housing. Obviously, housing conditions which mean lack of privacy will affect what people can do with their leisure. The other is legal restrictions on the use of leisure. Referring to "the out-of-date laws which affect the use of leisure in so many ways", "Leisure for Living" gives as examples the laws relating to licensing, betting and Sunday observance. Their reform, where necessary after enquiry, would, it says, "enlarge the freedom of the people of Britain".

The Arts

"The Arts" includes the "visual arts", that is, painting, sculpture, architecture and industrial design; music, ballet, drama, literature. The Labour Party's aim, for which the Labour Government did much even in the difficult days after the war, is to make the best in all the arts reasonably accessible to everyone. To quote "Leisure for Living": "This is an extension into adult life generally of our basic principle of equality of educational opportunity: we intend to do our utmost to make this aspiration a reality, in scale and in quality worthy of twentieth-century Britain."

The Government and the Arts. Before the second world war, State support for the arts was to all intents and purposes limited to the national museums and art galleries, for example, the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Royal Scottish Museum, and, more recently, the National Museum of Wales. The arts and entertainment were not thought to be a proper sphere for governmental action of any kind. Since the war this attitude has changed, and the arts now depend for their maintenance very largely on public funds. The Arts Council, established by Royal Charter in 1946, and financed by annual grants from the Exchequer, is the main channel of public patronage, apart from the local authorities.

During a debate in the House of Commons on January 23, 1959, the Government announced substantial increases in the amount of money to be provided for the arts: but this will be almost entirely for certain limited purposes, such as a larger subsidy for Covent Garden Opera House, and practically nothing will be left, for instance, for drama. **It remains true that the attitude of the Tory Government, in contrast to that of the Labour Government, is one of meanness; and that more public money is needed for the arts if they are to be accessible to everyone, particularly in the provinces, for which far too little is done, compared with London.**

Government assistance for the arts comes under two main heads: first, direct assistance by means of Exchequer grants for the national museums and art galleries, and for the upkeep of ancient monuments and the purchase and upkeep of historic buildings; second, indirect assistance through the Arts Council, which gives subsidies to the national opera and ballet companies and other bodies.

Expenditure by the Exchequer on the national museums and galleries, including grants for the purchase of pictures, etc., is under £3 million in 1959-60, of which London takes nearly £2,500,000; and on ancient monuments and historic buildings it was £1,250,000 in 1958-59. The grant to the Arts Council in 1959-60 is £1,218,000.

Of the grants made by the Arts Council, by far the largest are for opera and ballet (including Covent Garden Opera House, the Royal Ballet and Sadler's Wells), which in 1957-58 took about 60% of the total; and for the national orchestras, such as the London Symphony, the Hallé, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and amateur music clubs, mostly outside London. It also makes grants for drama

(the Old Vic, about thirty repertory theatres in the provinces), for the visual arts (mainly amateur art groups), for festivals, and for a few other purposes.

There are Scottish and Welsh Committees of the Arts Council, which make grants on similar lines, for example to the Scottish National Orchestra and the Welsh National Opera Company.

In the report for 1957-58 the Arts Council says that the present level of its grant falls short of its actual needs by at least £250,000; and that on an annual Exchequer grant of the order of £3 million it could "redeem the arts in Britain from their present insecurity and house them (in new theatres and concert halls) at the standard their merits and popularity deserve".

The Local Authorities and the Arts. Section 132 of the Local Government Act, 1948, gave local authorities in England and Wales power to spend on the arts and entertainment in any year an amount (excluding capital expenditure, but including loan charges) **not exceeding the product of a 6d. rate, plus the net receipts from any charges made.** The amount in Scotland is 4-4/5 pence. In addition, local education authorities can (and many do) spend varying sums on providing works of art for schools and colleges. Before the 1948 Act was passed local authorities had obtained their powers to spend on such purposes through private Bills: for example, the London County Council, under its General Powers Acts of 1935 and 1947, and leading holiday resorts.

In "The Development of Local Government", first published in 1931, Professor W. A. Robson said: "The most obvious defect in English local government at present is the almost complete neglect by the municipality of the cultural elements in social life. . . . The whole force of municipal enterprise has been concentrated into the utilitarian channels of public health and police, roads and housing, gas and water, while all the finer aspects of civic life have been persistently ignored." In 1956, in "Civic Entertainment and Its Cost" (London Council of Social Service) he wrote: "The beginnings of a change have now appeared. The outlook of some councillors and officials has altered: they are no longer convinced that man, or at least municipal man, must live by drains alone."

But the change has not gone very far, and it is estimated that expenditure by local authorities over the country cannot exceed the

equivalent of a three-farthing rate for museums and art galleries and one-fifth of a penny for music and drama. Even in the County Boroughs the average rates are well under 2d. for museums and galleries and less than ½d. for music and drama (Adult Education, Spring 1959). **Local authorities as a whole spend less than one-twentieth of the 6d. rate allowed under the Local Government Act of 1948.**

In his introduction to the Report of the Arts Council for 1958-59, however, the Secretary General of the Council says: "During the past decade the case for spending public funds upon the fine arts has been abundantly discussed and increasingly accepted, and it is fair to say that the question nowadays is usually not 'Why?' but 'How much?'" He goes on to point out that this "new keynote of opinion" has been "significantly expressed by local authorities, so many of whom were formerly slow to use the opportunities afforded them by the Local Government Act of 1948".

To give a few examples of municipal help for the arts: Some local authorities, such as Birmingham and Nottingham, assist the repertory companies in their cities. The Belgrade Theatre in Coventry is the first theatre ever to be built in this country out of public funds. Most of the symphony orchestras are supported by a number of local authorities, which co-operate for this purpose: for instance, local authorities in Lancashire and Cheshire jointly give financial assistance to the Hallé and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic orchestras, and fifty-three in the South-West have combined to support the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

Many provincial museums and art galleries are rate-aided, and almost all frequently hold exhibitions of pictures.

Referring to "the precarious plight of most of the provincial repertory theatre companies", the Arts Council Report for 1958-59 suggests that: "In the field of drama, as of music, much could be done if local authorities would combine to assist repertory companies who serve an area wider than that of a single Council." **Perhaps co-operation between local authorities may be the only way to provide a high standard of artistic opportunities in the provinces. The New Towns are particularly badly served, most of them having hardly anything in the way of theatres or halls, though many now have a considerable population.**

In almost every locality there are amateur dramatic and musical societies and others concerned with the arts, run independently or by industrial firms, and in many cases these are given some help by the local authorities.

Local authorities have power to provide community centres. In recent years there has been some development in both town and country, but as yet the number is quite inadequate. The main purpose of a community centre should be to give opportunities for social, recreative and educational activities, including facilities for drama and music.

In the life of the community, architecture is by far the most important of the visual arts. Here, especially since the war, the local authorities have notable achievements to their credit. As "Leisure for Living" says, the "principal dispensers of patronage" in architecture are the Government, the local authorities, and industry, and "Of these three, the local authorities have, on the whole, been by far the most courageous and forward-looking. The principal post-war achievements of British architecture . . . are some of the larger Council housing estates, such as the L.C.C.'s Lansbury and Roehampton developments; the New Towns such as Harlow, Peterlee and Stevenage; and above all, perhaps, the schools built by such progressive local education authorities as the Essex, Hertfordshire and London County Councils."

The Public Library Service. The public libraries are a very important part of municipal assistance to the arts, not only through their main job, lending books, but also in other ways.

The function of the public library is well put by the St. Pancras Borough Librarian in his Report for 1957-58: "The modern librarian is not simply a passive custodian; his task is to do everything in his power to see that his library is used, not only today but in the future also. In other words, he must provide an attractive and efficient service for adult readers, whether of books for recreation or information; and he must co-operate with the formal education service to assist in establishing in children and young people the habit of reading and the knowledge of the part books can play throughout their lives.

"In St. Pancras we go further and hold the opinion that the modern public library should extend its activities in any direction which will

encourage the use of books and that the public library should be both the patron of the arts, on behalf of the community it serves, and the focal point for all citizens interested in the arts."

Using the Council's powers under the Local Government Act, 1948 (usually delegated to an Entertainments Committee), the Public Libraries Committee in 1957-58 carried on such activities as arranging concerts, the St. Pancras Arts Festival (for the fourth year), forming a Municipal Choir, holding informal discussion meetings.

While few public libraries probably do as much as this, many buy pictures, run gramophone record libraries, have lectures on the arts and so on. Where there are no facilities for lectures in public libraries, Library Committees could consider providing them.

The Report of a Committee of Enquiry into the Public Library Service in England and Wales (the Roberts Report), published in February 1959, shows that, while many authorities operate an excellent and imaginative service, this is not true of many of the smaller ones. The powers of the local authorities, which administer the service, under the Public Libraries Acts, are permissive. The Committee recommends that there should be a review of public library authorities and that every such authority should have a statutory duty to provide an efficient library service. It also recommends that staff salary scales should be improved; that high priority should be given as soon as possible by the Government and library authorities to capital expenditure on premises and equipment; and that specific powers should be given to library authorities to spend money on activities of a cultural nature.

Industry and the Arts. The contribution of industry to the arts has so far been very small, and is estimated by the Arts Council to be about £50,000 a year in recent years, apart from single donations for special projects. As already noted, some industrial firms run local amateur societies concerned with the arts. A number of repertory theatres, for example Middlesbrough Little Theatre and the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, have received both private and business support. Industry partly finances the Council of Industrial Design, set up in 1944 to "promote by all practical means the improvement of design in the products of British industry". Industrial design, that is the appearance and fitness for its use of any article, such as a chair or a

piece of china, brings artistic values most clearly into everyday life. In industrial design, under the influence of the Council, Britain has made great advances since the war.

Under this heading reference must be made to the cultural activities of the Co-operative Movement. For example, many Co-operative Societies sponsor choirs and dramatic groups, some of which reach a very high standard; and the Education Department of the Co-operative Union has included design in its programme of consumer education for some time.

Proposals for the Future. There is no space in these Notes to say anything about the needs of each one of the arts. Neither is it necessary, since they are considered in "Leisure for Living".

The general aim of the Labour Party is stated on page 10 above. All that remains to do here is to quote specific proposals made in "Leisure for Living":

"In the new, more coherent pattern of patronage which we envisage, the Arts Council would still be the main element, but there would be changes both in the size of its grant and in the general arrangements for financing the arts. The Government should cease to dole out funds to the arts on a short-term basis, and should start thinking seriously in terms of a period ahead of at least five years."

"The post-war Labour Government undertook that a National Theatre should be founded at the earliest possible date. . . . The undertaking could not be implemented at that time because many urgent claims were competing for limited resources. We intend that it shall be implemented by the next Labour Government." (A National Theatre is not only a building: it is a national company as well as a national playhouse. Britain is almost unique amongst civilised nations in that it has no National Theatre.)

On industry and the arts "Leisure for Living" takes the view that industry—both publicly and privately owned—can "play an increasingly important part" in supporting the arts—"We should like to see much more co-operation between local civic and industrial bodies." In this way industry may help in improving artistic opportunities in the provinces.

Questions for Discussion

1. How can opportunities for people to "do things themselves" be provided, especially in overcrowded cities?
2. Do you think that reform of the licensing, betting and Sunday observance laws is desirable?
3. Do you agree that "enjoyment of the arts is something which our civilisation should make available to all who are capable of it"?
4. Do you think that the local authorities should spend more on the arts? If so, on what kind of activities should they spend, and how would you persuade the rate-payers to agree?
5. Is the public library service in your town or village satisfactory? How could it be improved?

III. HOW THE STATE CAN HELP (b)

Sound and Television Broadcasting

Watching television is today to the majority of people an important part of their leisure time. Its growth in popularity has been remarkably rapid. Out of a total adult population in Britain of 37,800,000, about 27 million have T.V. sets in their homes: 4 million more than a year ago, and 17 million more than five years ago. An adult views on average for between ten and eleven hours a week. There are also 11 million adults with radio sets who have no T.V.: they listen, in the evenings, for about $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours a week.

In some respects this growth in popularity has been not only remarkably but alarmingly rapid, for television has immense powers for both good and ill.

At its best, television adds to people's knowledge, for example of scientific subjects. It makes them aware of what goes on in the world, for instance of the poverty of the peoples of many countries, of the problem of the refugees—it may even have done something to shift the dead weight of the "I'm all right, Jack" attitude. It encourages them to think. Together with sound broadcasting it has contributed to the great increase since the war in public interest in music and drama, and in the demand for opportunities to see and hear "live" concerts, operas and plays.

On the other hand, at its worst or mediocre (and this applies to the greater part of the programmes) it plays down to people's love of sensationalism and violence and sets up false values. So far from encouraging people to think it discourages thought and produces a passive and receptive state of mind.

Because television is not just part of the entertainment industry, but is thus an immensely powerful influence on the public mind, the uses to which it is put are of great public interest. To quote "Leisure for Living": "We have always, therefore, stressed the importance of responsibility in the use of this powerful medium, and we do not believe that private profit-making should be its dominant motive." For this reason the Labour Party opposed the Conservative Government's proposals for commercial television contained in the White Paper, "Memorandum on the Report of the Broadcasting Committee", issued in 1951. As the result largely of the criticisms of the Parliamentary Labour Party, the form of commercial television which subsequently emerged, and was embodied in the Television Act of 1954, was very different from the original plan.

During the General Election of 1959 the Tories put about the story that a Labour Government would repeal the Television Act. This is untrue, and the Labour Party made the statement that: "We do not intend to repeal this Act. We believe, however, in the light of the experience of the past three and a half years, that steps must be taken to ensure that the intentions of the Act are carried out, that its provisions are enforced, and that evasions by the programme companies are stopped."

The main point for decision in the immediate future is that of the provision of a third television network. The question of how and by whom it should be controlled, when it is practicable, will require very careful consideration. **"Leisure for Living" takes the view that, if we are to have greater variety of programmes with more competition of the right kind, there is a strong case for setting up a new independent public corporation to run the third service.**

The B.B.C. operates under a ten-year Royal Charter, which came into force on 1st July, 1952. The Independent Television Authority also operates under a ten-year licence, to continue in force, unless previously revoked by the Postmaster General, until 29th July, 1964.

When the time comes to decide what further changes should be made, "a Labour Government will, in accordance with previous practice, appoint an independent committee, on the lines of the Beveridge Committee of 1949, to advise on future policy". ("Leisure for Living.")

Children and Television. As T.V. is now so important a part of the way children spend their leisure, two enquiries recently made into the effects of television on children must be referred to.

One was by Dr. Hilde Himmelweit, whose findings are published in the Nuffield Report, "Television and the Child" (Oxford University Press, 1958). The following is a summary of some of the recommendations made:

It is known that three out of four 10-11 year olds who view do so regularly until 9 p.m. Three out of four 13-14 year olds view until nearly 10 p.m.

Murder and crime thrillers should not be seen by children just before going to bed. Such plays should be avoided also because they offer a one-sided view of life, implying that all conflict has to be resolved by force.

As main effects on children are produced by the evening programmes and not by the children's, these should be good in quality and in diversity, devoid of sadism and sensationalism.

Television is too important a source of values and knowledge for teachers to take no action in suggesting programmes to view and referring to programmes in their teaching.

The main survey work on which the Report is based was carried out in 1955 and there have been considerable changes since. There is need, therefore, for further investigation.

The other enquiry was made by the Council for Children's Welfare. The Council sent out a questionnaire to which about 700 replies were received from parents (95% mothers) who had been asked to watch children's programmes with their children for at least two weeks. Of those who replied, 84% agreed on one main good effect of television, that it had increased their children's general knowledge and widened their horizons. As to the harmful effects, the most widely shared feeling (92%) was that in children's programmes far too many violent films are shown.

Other points of interest are that 34% of the parents are uneasy because time that used to be spent in other occupations (for example playing games) is now spent watching T.V.; 31% find that homework suffers; 25% are concerned that watching T.V. is such a passive occupation. Amongst suggestions for programmes, the most common were for more programmes dealing with the everyday life of children in other lands (62%), and more musical programmes of all sorts (51%).

The Cinema

As a leisure time occupation going to the pictures is becoming less popular. There has been a fall in recent years in the number of times on average that people visit the cinema: the net figure of closures in 1956 and 1957 was 367; and the number of cinemas in Britain in 1958 was 4,100.

No doubt the spread of television is an important factor here, but the fall in attendances is at least partly due to the disastrous decline in the quality of many of the films shown. "The pity is," said the *Observer* on 8th March, 1959, "that cinema, as an art, was and is capable of a greatness that T.V. has never approached. And even now films of real quality show a stubborn tendency to be commercially successful." But leaders of the film industry seem incapable of appreciating this and still rely largely on X films and the like to fill their cinemas.

Under the Cinematograph Film Acts of 1927, 1938, 1948 and 1957 the film industry is helped by means of the quota system, whereby a certain proportion of British films (fixed annually by Board of Trade Order) must be shown in British cinemas every year. For first feature films the quota has stood at 30% since 1950.

The Labour Governments took a number of steps to help the industry. In 1949 Harold Wilson, as President of the Board of Trade, set up the National Film Finance Corporation, a statutory body empowered to lend money for film production. Its members are appointed by the Board of Trade, which provides its funds by advances up to £6 million. The Corporation is financially concerned with about half the films being made in British studios.

In 1950 the Labour Government introduced the levy on cinema admissions to finance a film production fund, which helps all British

producers. This levy, a percentage of a film's takings, was at first a voluntary contribution by cinemas, but in 1957 it was replaced by a statutory scheme with the same purpose.

On "going to the pictures" **"Leisure for Living"** says: "Cinema is mass entertainment, industry, and, at its best, art." "For a number of reasons it is undesirable that the decline of the British film industry should be allowed to continue unchecked." "Apart from any social value the cinema may have, it is important to make it possible for British producers once more to develop it as an art. It will not be easy to catch up with the wasted years, but we shall give vigorous support to such bodies as the Children's Film Foundation and the British Film Institute."

Children and the Cinema. Though, with the attraction of T.V. at home, going to the pictures is becoming less popular with children, as it is with adults, it is essential that the welfare of children attending the cinema should be safeguarded. **The Departmental Committee on Children and the Cinema** (the Wheare Committee), which reported in 1950, made a number of recommendations to this end.

The Cinema Consultative Committee, consisting of representatives of the local authorities and the film industry, was set up by the British Board of Film Censors in 1951. This Committee in turn set up the Cinema Advisory Sub-Committee, which also includes representatives of the local authorities and the film industry, with in addition representatives of such bodies as the National Union of Teachers, the National Council of Women, the Children's Film Foundation. **The Sub-committee carefully considered all the recommendations of the Wheare Committee, and many have been carried out.** For example the Committee recommended that there should be a minimum age of 7 for the admission to the ordinary cinema of children unaccompanied by an adult; and that no unaccompanied child under 12 should be admitted to a cinema after 8 p.m. These recommendations are observed by nearly all licensing authorities. Another recommendation which has been carried out is that no child should be allowed to be present in a cinema during any part of a performance in which an X film is being shown.

The Cinema Advisory Sub-committee draws up a list of films specially recommended for children and gives a great deal of publicity to it.

The Children's Film Foundation was set up in 1951 as a result of the co-operative effort of the film industry to ensure the production and exhibition of special entertainment films for children. It is a non-profit making organisation financed by the British Film Fund Agency. The Foundation acquires stories that will entertain and set as high a standard of taste and behaviour as possible by appealing to children's intelligence and love of adventure, develops them into screen subjects and offers them for production to selected companies. The films are distributed by the Foundation to the four groups of cinemas that run Children's Film Clubs or Matinees. They are also shown in many countries overseas.

The Open Air

Sport. While facilities for games and athletics are of special importance to young people, they are of importance to older people also. Two sides of the question must be taken into account. The first and most essential is the provision of adequate opportunities for everyone who wants to do so to take part in games and other forms of sport. The second is the encouragement of first class sport of all kinds, whether by amateurs or professionals: this gives enjoyment to large numbers of spectators and is of value for national prestige. In both cases the provision made in this country compares most unfavourably with that in most other countries. **Playing fields, sports stadia, indoor and outdoor swimming baths, gymnasia, recreational facilities of all sorts are far short of the demand in many areas:** and as a result of the school "bulge" and the ending of National Service the demand will be greater still in two or three years' time.

The three main bodies which in Britain cater for sport are the British Olympic Association, the National Playing Fields Association and the Central Council of Physical Recreation. Practically every amateur sports club is associated with one or other of these organisations.

Under the Physical Training and Recreation Act, 1937, or the Education Act, 1944, local authorities are able to provide gymnasia and playing fields. They may also make grants to local voluntary organisations for athletic purposes. The National Playing Fields Association works as closely as possible with the local authorities.

“Leisure for Living” takes the very definite view that if this whole question is to be tackled thoroughly a Government lead and Treasury help are essential, and it makes the proposal that “there should be a Sports Council of Great Britain, analogous to the Arts Council. This will be appointed by the Minister of Education and will be accountable to Parliament through him. . . . It will be the Council’s job to co-operate with the national sporting organisations in the provision of all that is necessary for the fullest use of physical recreation . . . ; and generally to take such action as will raise the standard of games and athletics throughout the country. With the appropriate organisations and authorities, the Sports Council will be required to conduct a survey of the whole country, so that we may know more clearly the extent of the need. . . . Meanwhile, a Labour Government will make available to the Sports Council an initial sum of not less than £5 million for capital expenditure and administrative expenses, and thereafter such yearly sums as will enable it to do its job adequately.”

One of the Council’s main tasks will be to educate public opinion as to the importance of physical recreation.

It is emphasised that the setting up of the Sports Council will not affect the present relations between the central Government and the local authorities, which will receive grant aid direct from the Government.

Outdoor Recreation. On the wider question of open-air recreation the aim of the Labour Party is put in these sentences from **“Leisure for Living”**: As Socialists “we seek to secure for all men a richer and fuller life; and, in a nation one-third of whose people live in cities and towns, free access to open country and fresh air is an important part of such a life. So, through the years, we have fought to preserve natural beauty from the speculative developer and industrialist; and we have fought too, for a legal right of access to mountains, moors and coast.” “It is in the preservation of the natural beauty of our country and in its opening up for enjoyment by more and more people that there is probably the greatest scope for meeting leisure-time needs and, at the same time, contributing to the general well-being.”

The Labour Government did much to make this aim possible of achievement. The main instrument of State action is the **National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949**, which pro-

vided for the designation of a number of areas of beautiful country in England and Wales as National Parks. In these the characteristic landscape is to be preserved and facilities for open-air recreation may be provided or improved. The first ten years' work of the National Parks Commission set up under this Act has resulted in the establishment of ten National Parks: the Peak District, the Lake District, Snowdonia, Dartmoor, the Pembrokeshire Coast, the North Yorkshire Moors, the Yorkshire Dales, Exmoor, the upland country of Northumberland and the Brecon Beacons in Wales.

The National Parks are administered by bodies appointed by the County Councils in the areas they cover.

There is no National Parks Commission in Scotland, but a Scottish National Parks Working Party has considered five areas recommended as National Parks: the Trossachs, Glen Affric, the Cairngorms, Wester Ross and Glen Coe.

In addition to the National Parks established through the National Parks Commission there are eight public National Forest Parks, opened by the Forestry Commission, for example Glen Trool in Scotland and the Forest of Dean in England.

There are also unofficial bodies concerned with the preservation of the countryside. The largest of these are the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the National Trust for Scotland. Others include the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and the Ramblers' Association.

The National Trusts depend entirely on the support of their members. They have acquired, mainly through gifts, over a thousand properties which they hold for the enjoyment of the public. Between them they administer over 300,000 acres of land of great natural beauty, which is supposed to be safeguarded in perpetuity. Some of the houses of historic interest they own were transferred to the Trusts by the Treasury, which had accepted them in lieu of death duties.

Examples of National Trust property are part of the coast of Northumberland, parts of the Lake District, Clumber Park (Notts.), Ham House (Surrey).

The 1949 Act contained other provisions which are outlined in "Leisure for Living": in particular it set up the Nature Conservancy

which has "declared" eighty national Nature Reserves; it made possible the creation of long-distance footpaths such as the Pennine Way; and it gave local authorities power to improve public access to open country, mountains and moors.

A question in which public interest is rapidly growing is the pollution of rivers and beaches by sewage. Many rivers and coasts are grossly polluted and are unpleasant and perhaps dangerous to bathers. The Labour Government was responsible for the Rivers (Prevention of Pollution) Act of 1951. Conservative financial policy, however, has slowed down the modernisation of our sewage disposal system, and **"A Labour Minister of Housing and Local Government will launch a vigorous drive on this urgent problem"**. ("Leisure for Living.")

Under Tory Governments little or no progress has been made in building on the foundations laid by the Labour Government, and "Leisure for Living" says that: "Our survey of these questions convinces us that it is now urgent that there should be a fresh and sustained attack on this whole problem of the countryside—both the preservation and development of its amenities, and its opening up for the enjoyment of leisure in the open air." "We propose that the National Parks Commission should become the chief agency for the use of public funds for preserving and promoting enjoyment of the beauty of the countryside. . . . This will mean a considerable widening of the scope of the National Parks Commission, as well as the strengthening of its powers."

As an example, the rehabilitation of at present unused canals and towpaths, so that they can give opportunities for boating, fishing and walking, should come within the scope of the Commission.

"Leisure for Living" also says that it may be necessary to re-examine the policy which obliges the Central Electricity Generating Board to site nuclear power-stations on lonely coasts, where they impair solitude and beauty and damage wild life. A recent example is the decision, now approved by the Government, to build a power-station at Dungeness. The proposal of the Nature Conservancy that the area should be a Nature Reserve has had to be abandoned. Dungeness is also of unique value to the scientists who study coastal erosion, and, as was said in the *Observer* on November 29th, it "is to be wilfully destroyed for a temporary material gain".

If people are to enjoy the country they must have suitable holiday accommodation at reasonable charges. At present there is not nearly enough, especially for families with children. There is a need for many more hostels and guest houses run by voluntary bodies such as the Holiday Fellowship, the Co-operative Holidays Association and the Workers' Travel Association. In the Policy Statement "Let Scotland Prosper", the Labour Party pledged itself, when in power, to examine the whole problem, so far as Scotland is concerned, from the point of view of the needs not only of tourists from abroad but of ordinary people from other parts of Britain. "Leisure for Living" says that similar surveys should be made in England and Wales.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is there a danger that television may be used as the "opium of the people"?
2. What do you think about the comments and proposals made under the heading "Children and Television"?
3. Why are people going less to the pictures?
4. What further regulation, if any, of children's attendance at the cinema do you think necessary?
5. What more could your local authority do to provide opportunities for games and athletics?
6. What suggestions would you make for improving holiday accommodation, especially for families with children?
7. Should the nation spend more on opportunities for the use of leisure on the lines proposed in "Leisure for Living"?

SUMMARY OF THE NOTES

(This summary is intended for duplication and distribution to members before meetings at which the Notes are to be discussed. If this can be done it should help to increase attendance and make the discussion more useful.)

The Use of Leisure

The Labour Party does not intend to tell people how to use their leisure, but to give everyone a better chance than now of enjoying it.

Have we more leisure? In fact, for most workers, the hours actually worked today (apart from holidays with pay) are more than just after the war, and no less than in 1938.

With modern methods of production, including automation, however, there should be considerable reductions in hours; and the Trade Unions are now demanding both higher incomes **and** more leisure.

Will a higher standard of living give the housewife greater leisure also?

Modern methods of production mean that much work is dull and repetitive. It is all the more important, therefore, that people shall have more leisure and the opportunity to use it satisfactorily, especially the opportunity to do things themselves, for example playing games, instead of merely watching others.

How the State can Help

The arts. The aim of the Labour Party is to make the best in all the arts (painting, music, drama, etc.) reasonably accessible to everyone. The arts now depend very largely on the spending of public money on, for example, the national picture galleries, the opera. More is needed; but the attitude of the Tory Government, in contrast to that of the Labour Government, is one of meanness.

The local authorities have power to spend money on the arts and entertainment. While some do a considerable amount to assist the arts, for instance orchestras and repertory theatres, in general they spend much less than the law allows.

Sound and television broadcasting. The cinema. Television has grown very rapidly in popularity. Because it is an immensely powerful influence on the public mind the Labour Party has always stressed the importance of responsibility in its use. For this reason it opposed the Conservative Government's original proposals for commercial television; but it does not propose the repeal of the Television Act of 1954, contrary to what the Tories said during the General Election.

Going to the pictures is becoming less popular, due partly to the spread of television, partly to the disastrous decline in the quality of the films shown.

The effect of T.V. on children needs careful consideration, and the welfare of children attending the cinema must be safeguarded.

The open air. The facilities for games and athletics at present provided are far short of the demand. If this whole question is to be tackled thoroughly, a Government lead and Treasury help are essential.

The aim of the Labour Party is to preserve the natural beauty of our country and to open it up for enjoyment by more and more people. The Labour Government did much to make this aim possible of achievement, mainly through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949.

Much remains to be done by the next Labour Government. One of the questions which will have to be considered is the provision of enough suitable holiday accommodation at reasonable charges, especially for families with children.

These are some of the questions suggested for discussion:

Do you think that automation will give married women more leisure?

For example, does shift work mean more work in the home; is it likely that fewer married women will go out to work?

How can opportunities for people to "do things themselves" be provided, especially in overcrowded cities?

Do you think that the local authorities should spend more on the arts? If so, on what kind of activities should they spend, and how would you persuade the rate-payers to agree?

Is there a danger that television may be used as the "opium of the people"?

Why are people going less to the pictures?

What suggestions would you make for improving holiday accommodation, especially for families with children?

FURTHER READING

Labour Party. *Leisure for Living*. 1959. (1 copy 2/6d. including postage, 12 copies £1 4s. 0d. including postage.)

Labour Party. *The Younger Generation*. 1959. (1 copy 1/11d. including postage, 12 copies 17/- including postage.)

The Annual Reports of the Arts Council, 1957-58, 1958-59. 2/6d. each.

Lord Bridges. *The State and the Arts*. Oxford University Press. 1958. 2/6d.

The Gulbenkian Foundation. *Help for the Arts*. 1959. 3/-.
 R. Findlater. *The Future of the Theatre*. Fabian Society. 1959.
 2/6d.
 Report of the Nature Conservancy. *The First Ten Years*. 1959. 1/6d.
 Her Majesty's Stationery Office—
The Government and the Arts in Great Britain. 1958. 2/-.
Report of the Standing Commission on Museums and Art Galleries
for 1954/58. 4/-.
Report of the Committee on the Structure of the Public Library
Service in England and Wales. 1959. 3/6d.
Report of the Committee on Children and the Cinema. 1950. 3/-.
Annual Report of the National Parks Commission. 1959. 6/-.
 These publications can be bought from the Labour Party Bookshop,
 Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1.

LABOUR PARTY SUMMER SCHOOLS, 1960

The 1960 series of Labour Party Summer Schools will be held at Beatrice Webb House, near Dorking, Surrey, during the four weeks beginning 30th July, 6th, 13th and 20th August.

Courses will be offered in Socialist Principles and Policy, International Policy, Colonial Policy, Local Government, and Electoral Organisation. The study courses will be supplemented by general lectures given by prominent leaders of the Party.

Further information can be obtained from Mr. Morgan Phillips, Secretary, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1.

BLACKPOOL CONFERENCE SPEECHES

The speeches of Barbara Castle, Hugh Gaitskell and Aneurin Bevan at the Labour Party Annual Conference at Blackpool have been published as a pamphlet and circulated free of charge to Conference delegates and Party Secretaries.

Additional supplies of the pamphlet, the title of which is "Main Speeches", can be obtained from the Labour Publications Department, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1, at the following post-paid prices: 1 copy 5d., 12 for 2s. 9d., 25 for 5s. 3d., 50 for 10s., and 100 for 19s.

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